



## FACT SHEET

### FUTURE PROCESS FOR GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS

#### GENERAL PLAN UPDATE INFORMATION

**Website:**  
[www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate](http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate)

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#### BACKGROUND

Comments have been received on the General Plan Update related to how General Plan Amendments (GPAs) will be authorized after the GP Update is adopted. DPLU staff has conducted research and developed a range of options which would be consistent with the draft GP Update policies. Although the options presented in this fact sheet could be structured to consist of many different components and combinations, the options present a basis for initial discussion on a post GP Update Plan Amendment Authorization (PAA) process. As a post GP Update process, finalization of the process is not time sensitive and will likely follow approval of the GP Update rather than be considered concurrently.

#### DRAFT GENERAL PLAN UPDATE POLICY

The draft GP Update Policy LU-1.3 states, “**Initiation of Plan Amendments.** Require approval from the Board of Supervisors to initiate General Plan Amendments for private projects outside of a comprehensive General Plan Update.” This is the only policy in the draft GP Update that specifically addresses the PAA process and there are no requirements in State law. Therefore, the County has significant flexibility in developing a process for initiating GPAs.

#### EXISTING PLAN AMENDMENT AUTHORIZATION (PAA) PROCESS

Board Policy I-63 currently provides guidance on how GPA requested by private parties are to be initiated. Presently a Plan Amendment Authorization (PAA) is required from the County prior to an application for the GPA can be submitted. PAAs are submitted to the Director of DPLU for authorization. If denied by the Director, appeals are available to the Planning Commission and subsequently to the Board of Supervisors. Board Policy I-63 can be found at the following web address:  
<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/cob/policy/index.html#sectioni>

#### MODIFICATIONS TO THE PAA PROCESS

Draft GP Update Policy LU-1.3 will require a change to Board Policy I-63 as it requires the Board to approve all PAAs. There has been additional interest in improving the PAA and GPA process. The following sections describe several options for consideration in modifying the process.

#### OPTION 1 – PAA BATCH

##### Concept:

- BOS final decision on PAAs
- Director and PC continue to provide recommendations
- DPLU recommendation based on Vision and Guiding Principals of GP Update as well as applicable GP Goals and Policies and codes and ordinances.
- PAAs are batched and brought forward to PC and BOS at once as part of a 2 year review cycle.
- Large PAA requests may be processed independently of batched PAAs.
- BOS initiated PAAs are made part of a County initiated GPA 2-year processing cycle following initial 2-year review cycle.
- The 2-year review cycle starts at beginning of calendar year following GP Update Adoption.
- Applicants help to share costs of processing GPA and environmental documents.

##### Advantages:

- Avoids piecemeal submission of projects.
- Allows the County to view the cumulative impacts of PAA requests within proximity of each other.
- Continues to allow early review of GPA to assure consistency with sound Planning principles.
- Allows for greater control for County of its General Plan.
- Provides a comprehensive update to the General Plan EIR which will greatly streamline the cumulative impact analysis for regulatory projects.

##### Disadvantages:

- Prolonged period from start of PAA process to completion of GPA (up to four years).

##### Process:

1. Major Pre-application required.
2. PAA request submitted to Director for recommendation.
3. PAA submitted concurrently to CPG for recommendation to the Director.
4. Within 45-days Director issues letter to applicant with preliminary recommendation based on GP Update Vision and Guiding Principals, Goal, Policies, Codes and Ordinances, timeline, cost and process (County initiated GPA) should PAA be initiated by the BOS.

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5. Deadline for submission of privately initiated PAAs is set for six months prior to the end of the second calendar year.
6. Within 60-days of submission deadline PAAs with Director's recommendation are brought to PC for PC recommendation.
7. Within 60-days following PC hearing, PC recommendation is brought to BOS for PAA initiation.
8. Applicant's with BOS initiated PAA are sent letters requesting money to share the costs of County initiated GPA.

- GPAs are batched and brought forward to PC and BOS at one time as part of a County initiated GPA 3-year processing cycle.
- Combined Processing Cycle restarts at end of three year cycle.

## Advantages:

- Eliminates extra PAA step
- Avoids piecemeal submission of projects.
- Allows the County to view the cumulative impacts of PAA requests within proximity of each other.
- Allows for greater control for County of its General Plan.
- Continues to allow review of GPA requests against good Planning principles and allows a mechanism to discontinue processing inconsistent GPA requests.
- Provides a comprehensive update to the General Plan EIR which will greatly streamline the cumulative impact analysis for regulatory projects.

## Disadvantage:

- Prolonged period from start of GPA process to completion of GPA (up to three years).

## Process:

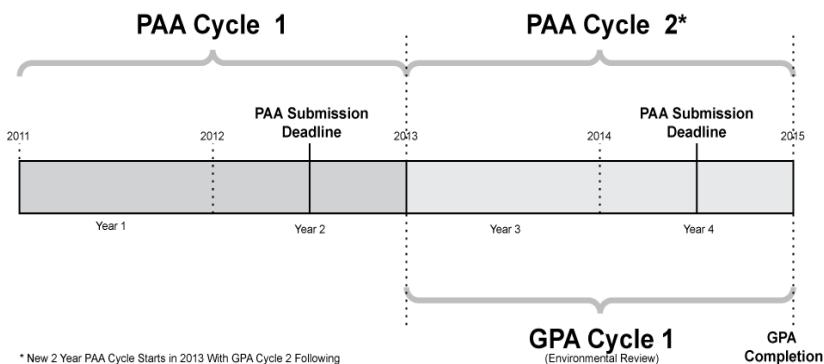
1. Major Pre-app required.
2. GPA application submitted to DPLU
3. GPA submitted concurrently to CPG for recommendation to the Director
4. Within 30-days Director issues scoping letter to applicant with preliminary recommendation on GPA based on GP Update Vision and Guiding Principals, Goals, Policies and Codes and Ordinances, timeline, cost and process (County initiated GPA) should GPA move forward as part of batch to BOS.
5. Following scoping letter issuance, Director brings forward GPA requests which the Director recommend can be authorized for BOS initiation.
6. GPAs which the Director determines cannot be recommended for authorization based on the above concepts will be brought forward to the PC with recommendation for denial.
7. GPAs which the PC determines cannot be recommend for authorization based on the above concepts will be brought forward to the BOS with recommendation for denial.
8. Overturned Director or PC recommendations will be included as part of the batch GPA process.

## OPTION 2 COMBINED PAA/GPA PROCESS

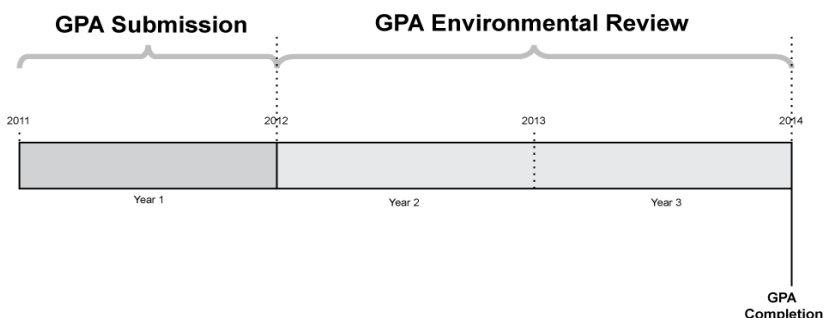
### Concept:

- PAA process combined with privately initiated GPA application scoping timeline.
- GPA application may be submitted in conjunction with implementing permits.
- BOS final decision on GPA authorizations.
- Director and PC continue to provide recommendations.
- DPLU recommendation based on Vision and Guiding Principals of GP Update as well as applicable GP Goals and Policies and applicable codes and ordinances.
- Large GPA requests may be processed independently of batched GPAs.

## OPTION 1 PROCESS



## OPTION 2 PROCESS



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9. Deadline for submission of GPAs is set for the end of the first calendar year.
10. Combined Processing Cycle restarts at end of three year cycle.
11. Applicants with “accepted” GPA applications are sent letters requesting money to share the costs of County initiated GPA.
12. Following GPA approval, applicants can rely on environmental documents to obtain entitlements.

## OPTION 3 – EXISTING PROCESS WITH MODIFICATIONS

### Concept:

- Retain existing process however include specific criteria and findings based on Vision and Guiding Principles of GP Update as well as applicable GP Goals and Policies.
- BOS final decision on PAAs.
- Checklist of Findings created based on the above. Project must meet required Findings.
- Continue to accept and process PAAs when submitted.
- Continue to process linked GPAs independently when submitted as result of initiated PAA.

### Advantages:

- Leaves existing process mostly intact.
- Allows for potentially faster processing when compared to Options 1 and 2.

### Disadvantages:

- Allow the piecemeal submission and processing of GPAs.
- Diminishes County control over its General Plan
- There may be controversy with establishment of Findings

### Process:

1. PAA request submitted to Director for recommendation.
2. PAA submitted concurrently to CPG for recommendation to the Director.
3. PAA reviewed against Findings
4. Director to render a recommendation on PAA within 30 days.
5. PAAs brought to PC for recommendation.
6. PAA brought to BOS for final authorization.
7. Initiated PAA must file a privately initiated GPA request with DPLU within two years of the PAA being initiated; otherwise the PAA initiation approval expires.

## OTHER POSSIBLE OPTIONS

- Same as current PAA/GPA process however do not batch GPAs– only approve four privately initiated GPAs per calendar year. This would allow minimal change to the General Plan.
- Combined process – same as first bullet except that “left over” GPAs could be made part of a County initiated GPA if warranted. GPA allowed to remain as privately initiated provided they meet certain criteria which justifies them not being made part of County initiated GPA, i.e. mapping error, density bonus project, health and safety issue, etc...
- Retain existing process exactly as is except all PAAs go to BOS for final authorization.

## GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS – OTHER COUNTIES

### Los Angeles County

- No Initial screening of GPAs (Go the BOS as discretionary permits);
- GPAs are not batched (The County did have a Policy of batching GPAs in the past);
- Individual GPAs which do not make yearly limit of four must wait to the following year.

### Orange County

- No Initial screening of GPAs (Go the BOS as discretionary permits);
- GPAs are not batched;
- Individual GPAs which do not make yearly limit of four must wait to the following year.

### San Luis Obispo County

- Plan Amendment Authorization Process – BOS authorize GPAs;
- GPAs are not batched;
- Individual GPAs which do not make yearly limit of four must wait to the following year.

### Santa Barbara County

- Plan Amendment Authorization Process exists;
- For “minor” GPAs New Case Review Committee decides whether the GPA application should be accepted;
- Rejected minor GPA applications can be withdrawn or appealed to the Planning Commission and then appealed to the BOS;
- For “major” GPAs requiring substantial map or text changes or an extremely complex

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project, go before the PC or BOS for authorization.

## Ventura County

- Plan Amendment Authorization Process – BOS authorize GPAs;
- GPAs are not batched;
- Individual GPAs which do not make yearly limit of four must wait to the following year.